

I'm Sure They're Fine by GallifreyGod

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Summary:

Joyce and Hopper are going out on their first date night alone. Of course, the parents weren't too keen on leaving Will, Mike, Lucas, Dustin, Jane, and Max with Steve to babysit. The parents only asked one thing of the group - Don't burn the house down!

I'm Sure They're Fine

Author's Note:

This was originally posted to my tumblr, thought I would post it here too!

Six months without a single date. Joyce and Hopper had hit every base necessary to their relationship, hugs, kisses, much more intimate moments, along with arguments and more. But not once did they ever go out on an official date night out,

That was until the night of December 18th, 1985. Joyce had managed to find a wearable black dress in the bottom of her closet. She was surprised that it even fit since she hadn't worn it since junior year of high school.

Hopper finally shed out of the beige police uniform for something a little more comforting. Black pants with a green button up shirt, and a groomed face. At least he didn't cringe in the mirror.

Jonathan already had standing plans with Nancy when Hop and Joyce agreed to a spontaneous date. The two nervous parents agreed that Steve Harrington would be the best option for babysitting...saying that ever so loosely. The truth was, he was their *only* option.

They didn't mind him alone to watch the kids when the frantic moments of demon possession and gate closing came along – until they found a sedated Billy on the floor and a frozen demodog in the freezer. But tonight would be different, *hopefully*. No demons, no demogorgons, no anesthetized assholes, just a fun night for everybody.

Luckily, Steve had arrived at the Byers' house with a car full of kids, *as usual*. Dustin, Lucas, Mike, and Max had arrived for a night with Will and Jane.

Both Joyce and Hopper agreed her house would be safer grounds for Jane to stay rather than the Wheelers' home. Still being careful about

where she goes and with who, Hopper knew that it was easier for everybody.

"Damn, Mrs. Byers! Got a hot date tonight?" Dustin knowingly joked, earning him a smack from Lucas and a playful glare from Joyce.

As the boys argued over whether that was too 'presumptuous' or not, Joyce gathered her keys and cigarettes into her purse. She wanted to yell at Hopper for being late when there was still five minutes until he was supposed to show up.

Part of her was so nervous that she wanted to get it over with already. The other part was just her anxiety trying to come up with reasons why they shouldn't go. Joyce continued her attempts to override her panic as she waited for Hopper.

A partial knock sounded at the door before Hopper stepped in with Jane in tow.

"Joyce! Hopper said you'd '*look like a snack*' but I don't know what that means. But you do look good though!" Jane laughed as she hugged Joyce. He must not have realized he was talking out loud when he ran over this date in his mind.

"I didn't say that! She sure uh... she sure has a colorful imagination." Hopper mumbled with a nervous groan as he nudged his daughter off to the party.

"Well, you're looking pretty dapper yourself." Joyce smiled as she adjusted the collar of his shirt. "Are you ready to go?"

"More than you'll ever know." Hop chuckled as he kissed her forehead. "You look stunning by the way." She looked less like a snack and more like a three-course meal with dessert.

"Thanks, it's nothing really." She lied right through her teeth. It had taken almost an hour and an entire bottle of cleaner to scrub the vomit stain out from the '58 winter formal. Karen had added a little bit too much schnapps into her drink and Joyce was left to carry the sick teen home.

"Alright, pizza will be here in an hour. Do not stay up past 11:30,

alright? I'll call and check on you if I'm not home by then. The roads are nasty so no leaving either. Please don't burn the house down while we're gone." Joyce looked around for confirmation of the group.

"Alright, bye." Joyce kissed the top of Will's head before Steve assured her he had it under control. She didn't believe him for a second but Hopper had rushed her out before any other argument.

From the house to the restaurant, their conversation was built around how their day went. Jim could tell that Joyce was clearly nervous about leaving the kids alone in her house, but he didn't want that to ruin their night.

As Hop pulled into a parking space and turned the car off, he rested his hand on her knee. "I'm sure they're alright." He said with a comforting smile. It had only been fifteen minutes, what was the worst that could've happened?

"You put that lighter down right now Dustin James Henderson or so help me God!" Steve yelled as he chased the fourteen-year-old around. Dustin ran through the halls laughing as the flame from the lighter billowed.

Hopper opened the restaurant door for Joyce as they walked in. His hand on her back certainly calmed her down but not enough to stop worrying.

"Reservation for two, under Hopper." He nodded and the hostess grabbed their menus. They were in the fanciest Italian restaurant that the next town over had to offer. Jim had certainly gone all out on this one.

"Wow, Hop. This is really out of our ballpark of Doritos and beer at midnight during Golden Girls reruns." Joyce joked as he pulled her chair out for her.

"You deserve it, Joyce. It's been a rough couple of years. You deserve a nice night out." Hop replied as he glanced around their table. This was the first time he would be eating with actual silverware in a long time.

"Thank you, I really appreciate all of this," Joyce said with a soft smile while she opened her menu.

The worry of leaving the kids home had caught up with Jim while he looked over the wine menu. Did he really trust seven kids home alone while he and Joyce ate steak?

"Jane! Stop trying to lift the lighter out of his hand! If he drops it, the whole house is gonna go down!" Steve yelled as Jane continued trying to move the flame out of her friend's hand. Obviously, Dustin was doing this to get a rise out of Steve, but it was just getting annoying.

"I'm sure the kids are fine." Joyce and Hopper mumbled in unison as the worries continued to plague their nice evening.

As the waiter came and went with their order, Joyce nervously swirled her wine glass. "Should I call them and just make sure they're okay?"

"If it will make you feel better, they're probably just playing video games and eating pizza." Hop tried to comfort her when he was actually trying to comfort himself.

"I think I'll call, just for peace of mind." Joyce murmured before excusing herself. As she made her way to the payphone outside, she fished a quarter out of her purse.

"Shut the fuck up, everybody! The phone is ringing!" Steve snapped as Lucas yelled at Dustin for swinging the lighter in the air.

"Steve?" Joyce asked nervously as the phone clicked on.

"Joyce, everything alright?" Steve asked. It was evident from her voice that she was antsy and nervous.

"Shouldn't I be asking you that? How are things going?" Joyce asked as she lit a cigarette.

"Everything is fine." Steve lied nonchalantly. Dustin was running through the house with a flaming lighter, Jane was trying to use her powers to stop him, Lucas and Max were yelling for him to stop, while Mike and Will screamed over the Atari.

"Al-alright... Hop and I are gonna finish up here. We will be home soon. Make sure everybody cleans up the pizza plates." As Joyce continued to prolong the conversation, she carefully listened for any signs of distress in the household.

"Will do, Mrs. B. Enjoy yourself tonight. We're all just hanging out." Steve's voice sounded like a smile but truthfully he was plotting Dustin's death with each

passing second.

"Alright bye." Even with a reassuring call ended, Joyce didn't feel the slightest bit better about the situation.

"Everything alright at the house?" Hopper asked as Joyce trailed back into the restaurant.

"Yeah, Steve said they were all doing alright," Joyce replied as she slid back into her seat.

"Joycie, they've been home alone a million times. I'm sure it's gonna be okay." Hop rubbed his thumb over her hand as he searched for recognition in her eyes.

"They've never been alone altogether, not like this at least. Just motherly instincts, you know?" She asked with a sip of wine and a bite into her food.

"I understand. The first few weeks that Jane was at the cabin, I thought I was going insane with the idea of leaving her alone. If anything, I'm sure Will is holding down the fort." Hopper smiled.

*"The fire extinguisher is in the cabinet next to the stove!
No! The other side of the stove!" Will shouted as Steve
riffled through the kitchen.*

"Yeah, he's always been the adult of the group, in my opinion, him and Mike at least. I'm sure it's nothing." Joyce laughed as she hooked a green bean on her fork.

"Pull the pin to make it work you, you idiot! You have to

pull the pin!" Dustin shouted as Steve fussed with the fire extinguisher.

"This is all your fault! If you weren't being a squirrely ass with the lighter, trying to be a dick, this wouldn't have happened!" Steve shouted back before the extinguisher gushed with white foam.

"Yeah, it's Henderson I'm worried about. Trouble just seems to follow that kid like it's his shadow." Hopper finally managed to make Joyce full-blown laugh. It was nice to see her smile nowadays. Even as the grin became more frequent, Hopper didn't want to take it for granted. There had been too many days where that smile wasn't even a thought.

The nervous pool in her stomach was growing again and much more rapidly. Joyce's smile was defeated with a frown while her foot tapped anxiously.

"I'm sure they're fine. What's the worst that could happen?" She asked, trying to reassure herself it was all fine.

"Jesus H Christ ! How dry is this Christmas tree?" Steve groaned as the tree seemed to become more and more enveloped in flames with each moment passing.

"I'll get a bucket of water!" Dustin shouted as he ran off to the kitchen.

"Unplug the tree lights first!" Max shouted just as Dustin was about to dump the pail of water onto the tree.

"They can't do much. It's not like they could burn the house down." Just as the words escaped Hopper's mouth, they both felt a welt of worry grow in their guts. Their nervous glances met and no words were needed.

"I'll pay the tab, you go pull the truck around." Hopper tossed her his keys and she jet-packed out the door. Hopper chucked a couple Jackson's on the table and ran out to the blazer.

"Let's just call 911, they can come and put it out before they get home !" Mike suggested as the flames on the tree grew bigger.

"The chief is gonna kill us!" Lucas groaned nervously while Max ran to the phone to call 911.

Hopper had to admit one of the sexiest things he had ever seen was Joyce Byers in a black dress and in the driver's seat of his blazer. That was definitely going into his bank of perfect memories.

As they drove through the dark and snowy roads, Hopper flipped on the lights and left Joyce to drive faster.

Hitting the outskirts of Hawkins, Joyce heard what sounded like a firetruck coming from the west.

"Dear God." Hopper groaned as he rubbed his face with his palms.

"You don't think?" Joyce asked nervously as she floored the gas.

"No, it can't be. Just a coincidence." His words were, of course, no solace to either of the worried parents.

When the police blazer finally touched the road the Byers' house resided on, Hop and Joyce both saw the firetruck heading towards her house.

"For fuck's sake!" They both groaned angrily. "I swear to God, Hop. They burned my house down." Joyce didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the irony.

Pulling into the driveway, she saw three firefighters carrying a

scorched tree out of her house. Seven teenagers stood outside shamefully as one of the firefighters was clearly chastising them.

"What on God's green earth happened?" Hopper shouted as the two of them shot out of the blazer.

Six of them looked over at Dustin with a furious expression. No words were needed to explain that Henderson had caused the uproar.

Joyce groaned inwardly before collapsing into Hopper. Rubbing her back shamefully, Jim looked around at the worried faces of the teens.

"The tree was the only damage. Once we got in here, we were able to put it out. You got lucky this time." The fire chief nodded towards Hopper as if they were having a mental conversation.

"Alright. I think we can both agree that Doritos, beer, and Golden Girls reruns are our best bet from now on." Hopper joked, causing Joyce to laugh with shame.

"Not for a second was I sure that they would be fine."

Author's Note:

Duffer Brothers own these lil babychiilds